

**Baltimore County, Maryland
Environmental Protection & Sustainability (EPS)**

Chesapeake Bay Critical Area

The Critical Area regulations require all development within 1000 feet of tidal waters and tidal wetlands meet specific provisions, including setbacks from the water and limits on lot coverage (also known as impervious surface) and forest and tree clearing.

How does a Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Easement on my property affect my use of the land?

The areas of Easement are areas of non-disturbance. Disturbance includes, but is not limited to, tree removal, shrub removal, clearing, mowing, burning, spraying and grazing. Other prohibited practices include filling or dumping, diking, ditching or draining. Structural shore erosion protection measures shall be constructed or installed as provided pursuant to COMAR 27.01.04 and only as permitted by this Department. Other prohibited practices include new lot coverage or structures of any size, the storage or operation of motorized vehicles of any kind, the housing, grazing or maintenance of animals, the use, storage or application of pesticides, and the storage of materials.

How can I determine if a Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Easement is on my property?

The plat for the property will show easements. The Easement will be labeled. A plat may be obtained at the Office of Land Records, Clerk of the Court, located at 401 Bosley Avenue, Towson, Maryland, or Maryland State Archives at www.msa.md.gov and look for the Plats.net link.

May I cut trees or clear forest on my property?

Any trees within 100 feet of tidal waters or tidal wetlands cannot be removed without permission from this Department, and if the tree is removed, it must be replaced.

What activities will require a permit?

Many activities require a permit, particularly within the Critical Area. Construction of a new home, garage, addition, deck/porch, pool, shed, gazebo, retaining wall, sidewalk, fence, new or replacement pier/piling/bulkhead, or paving or grading could require a permit. The Department of Permits, Approvals and Inspections should be contacted at 410-887-3353 for all inquiries.

Violations—What happens if I have one or see one?

Violations of Environmental regulations are taken seriously. They are typically discovered during routine Easement inspections and/or through concerned citizens. When a violation is discovered, the property owner is notified and advised of the corrective measure(s) to be taken to bring their property into compliance. The objective is to protect the resources and fine violators as a last resort if the problem is not corrected in a timely manner. Fines can be substantial, and add up daily per violation. All violations related to the topics on this Fact Sheet may be reported to 410-887-3980.



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